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cated, charming and, at the same time, detestable country. Your judgment of it all depends from your point of view. The artist sees nothing in Italy but picturesque beauty, glorious sunlight, clear atmosphere and a heavenly blue sky. The poet dreams of nothing but the old poetical romances connected with nearly every old Italian house. The philosopher wonders at the apparent contentment of the people. The practical business man sees no chance for making money in Italy, so hurries on to newer lands across the sea. The hurrying "globe-trotter" does the sights (and there are many of them) as well as time will admit, and carries away from the land of Dante a vague but pleasant souvenir.

Let us look at Italy as it really is, and try and form a correct opinion of the country. This is not our first trip here; in fact, it is our third, so we will not contemplate this land with the eyes of a tourist, but rather as a temporary resident. It is not easy to form an unbiassed judgment. On every hand beauty of form and outline assails your artistic taste and makes you forget (if you are not careful) the stern reality. But if you have no artistic appreciation—and there are some unfortunate people born without any—you are apt to be too much biassed in the other direction, and ignore the good, the true and the beautiful that still exist in the land of Virgil. The impressions made upon the mind of a thoughtful foreigner by a residence in Italy are complicated and numerous. How can one sum up in a few lines the spirit of the land? How resume in a single formula all the petty hatred of unpleasant things, all the sincere sympathies of other agreeable ones, that impress the dweller in the Italy of to-day? To say that there is nothing good, nothing noble, nothing worthy here, is untrue. To say that all is beauty, peace, prosperity and contentment, is equally false.

I said that Italy is deceptive. So it is. The beautiful groves of olive and orange trees only cast a leafy shade over the misery of a sterile soil; just as broad boulevards and long rows of ugly houses, new but empty, deceive the eye as to the finances of a ruined city like Rome, which is now in bankruptcy. A fifth part of the territory of this lovely peninsula is not fit for any kind of cultivation, and two other fifths are only mediocre. The abrupt foot-hills of the Alps and Apennines are only covered by scant, scrubby forests, while the low, marshy lands near the coast are not good even for pasturage. The thoughtlessness of fifty generations of men has changed the climate and compromised the salubrity of the country. The woody heights have recklessly been despoiled of trees, and this has seriously affected the rainfall. Land that formerly produced abundant harvests now has to endure alternate inundations and drouth. The climate is not always perfect here by any means. The winters are never as severe as in our New England, but all around Florence, for instance, the snow falls and the cold "tramontana" winds blow. In summer the hot, desert-born "chirocco" parches up every thing and enervates man and beast. South of Naples, to be sure, the climate is always mild and generally sunny, and roses bloom in the open air all winter. But that is not all of Italy. A German writer who has studied the subject profoundly (as they do everything) declares that one will have to go as far as Scandinavia to find in Europe a country as little favored by nature as Italy. This seems like an exaggeration. Even Spain, he says, is superior to Italy as an agricultural land. I know that this is not what is generally thought of Italy in America; but, alas! it is true.

The most insurmountable obstacles that oppose any

progress in Italian agriculture are the heavy taxes imposed on land. In no other country is such a considerable portion of the net revenue from agriculture absorbed by the public treasury. Annual taxes amounting to more than 300,000,000 of francs are collected, and this is not equally divided. The mean average should be 9 francs per head, but *in Lombardy the inhabitants have to pay at the rate of 18 francs each, which is equal to about 60 per cent. of the net revenue from their lands.* The industrious Italian peasant, who is a hard worker, patient, sober and economical, might have endured the heavy taxes if an agricultural crisis—the end of which is not yet—had not suddenly lowered the price of all products of the soil. Italian wheat has had to suffer from the concurrence of that from America and Russia. Now we come to the consideration of wine, the supreme resource of a country whose climate and soil are so marvellously adapted to the cultivation of the vine. Signor Crispi, the late Prime Minister, denounced the treaty of commerce with France. The consequence was that most of the wine growers of Italy lost their chief customers.

The miserable habitations of the poor rural workers do not conform to any of the ordinary rules of decency or health. Although the climate is generally mild, these rickety houses do not protect their numerous dwellers against the rigors of extreme seasons. Their food is insufficient. The poor, hard working, sober peasants are obliged to live on very little. They do not have meat oftener than once a month, if even then. Their chief diet is "polenta," a kind of meal made from corn, which resembles what we call, in the country, "chicken feed." Official documents go to prove that in certain provinces the inhabitants of the country eat nothing else. "Polenta" in the morning and "polenta" at night. This "polenta" begets a disease known as the "polenta" malady, from which other nations do not suffer. The misery in Italy is pitiable, the people suffer dreadfully from over-taxation, lack of money and other things, yet they manage to be more cheerful and contented than one would expect. The Italian has learned how to be comparatively happy on nothing a year. KARL KAROLY.

THE PROBLEM OF WAR.

REV. ABEL STEVENS, D. D.

The problem of war—what are its prospects?

1. As was shown, in a former article, it is likely to be "absorbed," and finally solved, by the great labor problem now overshadowing the civilized world—the problem of the rectification, not to say the reorganization, of the condition of the working masses.

The common people are the substance of any nation. They, indeed, make the world; and the time has come, in the progress of civilization, in which the legislation and government of nations must be for the "masses," and not for classes. This is the logical upshot of current history; the true generalization of the idea of modern civilization. That idea is revealed in the ever-increasing ascendancy of popular power, founded in the supremacy of the popular rights and interests. It is democracy in its best sense; and that means the equality and fraternity of men, as "implicitly," if not "explicitly," taught by Christianity. It is the underlying idea of Christian civilization, and hence, as we have seen, the labor problem, and all kindred problems, are geographically limited to Christendom.

War is the greatest drain on the resources of the people; hence the Socialistic and Workingmen's conventions in Europe have denounced it as the chief power of their oppressors, and the chief calamity of the industrial masses. In the last three years, as has been shown, the six great powers of Europe (less than half of its number of States) have expended, for war purposes, four thousand millions of dollars, and now keep under arms nearly ten millions of men—the latter about three times as numerous as the American people were when they first declared themselves a nation. The people begin to see that one of the first means of their own amelioration must be the correction of this monstrous evil. Anarchical as the labor question may be, in some of its temporary incidents, it promises to be, and must finally be, a great anti-war movement.

2. The idea of

ARBITRATION

is rapidly spreading throughout the civilized world. Since the Anglo-American example, at Geneva, this grand and yet very simple and very feasible idea has been taking possession of individual leading minds, until it has now become a general public sentiment. Sagacious thinkers have long foreseen this coming revolution. As long ago as 1783 Sir Samuel Romilly and his friend Baynes visited Franklin, at Passy, France. Romilly pronounced him the most remarkable of celebrated persons he had ever seen. "The novelty of his observations, at least the novelty of them to me, at that time, impressed me as one of the most extraordinary men that ever existed." This is strong language as coming from the greatest of English law reformers, the man who has saved thousands of lives from the gallows. He had, however, good occasion for his remark, in a conversation which his friend had held with the American sage. Baynes reports that Franklin thought arbitration, as a substitute for war, to be yet impracticable; but supposed that "two or three sovereigns might agree upon an alliance against all aggressions and agree to refer all disputes between each other to some third person, or set of men, or power. Other nations, seeing the advantage of this, would gradually accede, and, perhaps, in a hundred and fifty or two hundred years, all Europe would be included." Only a hundred and seven of his minimum of years have passed, and his prediction is, we may trust, already beginning to be fulfilled, not by a few sovereigns of Europe, but by his own country, for which he was then in Paris soliciting the recognition of Europe. The Geneva decision was a propitious omen. But the

PAN-AMERICAN DECISION

at Washington is an immeasurably larger demonstration. It virtually pledges, as I have said, the whole New World to the doctrine of arbitration. And what does this signify, at the present hour, in the world's history? The nations thus pledged cover a territory which, with its dependent islands, is four times as large as that of Europe, constituting nearly one-third of the dry land of the planet. Their combined population will, in less than fifty years, be larger, by twenty millions, than that of all Europe to-day. North America alone will, in seventy years, have, exclusive of its Indians and Africans, an Aryan population (mostly Teutonic) far exceeding the present population of Europe.

Were the telegraph to announce to-morrow that all the

powers of Europe had combined in such a pledge as that of the Washington Convention, what a startling effect would the announcement produce on all the world! No more wars in Europe! This indeed would be an epoch in the history of the human race—a revolution whose consequences must ultimately be not only European, but world-wide. Such a reform in Europe might be presently more important than a similar one in the New World, but *prospectively* it would be more momentous in the latter. The latter, we may hope, is now secured to perpetual domestic peace. If it be so, no pen can estimate the full significance of its new attitude. A new day has dawned on our planet, the flag of peace, which was put cautiously on the outer wall at Geneva, has been thrown at last out to the heavens, on the topmost pinnacle of the future citadel of the world; for, boastful as it may seem, and egotistical as we undeniably are, no thoughtful man can doubt that the future of our planet is chiefly in the power of this New World. Our own republic alone has now a larger territory than all Europe; in some sixty-five years it will have a population more than equal to the whole present population of Europe. Add all the other States of North and South America, and take into account the immense superiority of the resources of the New World over those of the Old, and it seems indisputable that the policy of the former must, sooner or later, dominate over the latter. The example of arbitration, on so large a scale as the one hemisphere, can hardly fail to bring the other hemisphere to the same policy.

Wars are still terrible—terrible as facts, but no longer tenable in theory. The civilized world is morally outgrowing war, though the nations are still disastrously involved in its traditional meshes.

We have passed into a new stage of civilization, the era of

INDUSTRIAL CIVILIZATION.

Every year, with the progress of material interests and consequent commerce, war is becoming more and more incompatible with the welfare of States. Its problem stands now right on the road of progress, confronting the labor problem, and must inevitably give way before the latter. The advancing moral sense of the world comes in, overwhelmingly, to abet this protest of the material and social interests of the race. The chivalry and poetry of war have nearly gone. Men see that there can be no logical propriety in attempting to solve great ethical questions by blowing out each other's brains. International disputes are, in the last analysis, ethical questions—questions of the right or wrong of one party or the other. How, in the name of all wisdom and virtue, can such questions be decided by arraying hundreds of thousands of men on either side to cut each other to pieces in battle? Can the infernal uproar of the fight, the scattered brains, pierced hearts, scattered limbs, of the field, settle a moral question? Could the half million combatants, the two hundred thousand cannon-shots fired, the hundred thousand slain men of the battle of Leipsic, prove which of the contending powers was right or wrong? Let us hope in God that the day for such terrible logic is passing away. Surely, it is only by an astounding perversion that Christianity has ever been made to tolerate it. Surely if, as we have argued, Christian civilization is on the march, and is to take the world, this nightmare of the antique and mediæval barbarism is to be dispelled forever.—*Zion's Herald*.